The natural and the pragmatic in Kant's Anthropology

The Natural, the Pragmatic and the Moral in Kant's Anthropology: The Case of Temperaments[1]

The aim of this paper is to explore the interconnections between the normative and the descriptive dimensions of Kant's anthropology. I will suggest that far from being independent of each other or even excluding each other, as is often presupposed, the normative standpoint necessitates the explanatory one. For while Kant's anthropology is expressedly and legitimately normative in its intent, I will argue that achieving this purpose requires it to have a descriptive and explanatory dimension. To support this claim, I will discuss the case of human temperaments and show in what sense a necessary component of pragmatic anthropology consists in the naturalistic study of human nature – what Kant calls 'what nature makes of the human being'.[2] I will briefly conclude by reflecting on whether this is a useful way of thinking about Kant's anthropological project as a whole.

1. The Realm of the Pragmatic

I want to begin by emphasising that the claims of Kant's pragmatic anthropology are literally practical – they comprise advice, recommendations, counsels, guidance, warnings and even admonitions. In this regard, it should be noted that Kant's lectures on anthropology, on which his published *Anthropology* is based, were intended to teach students how to apply what they learnt at university to their future profession as well as to the conduct of their life in general. Their popularity led students to produce transcripts that were traded and handed down from year to year, and they eventually formed the basis of the published *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View* in 1798.[3] In other words, these lectures, which arose from the *Lectures on Physical Geography*, were meant to show students how to use their knowledge and talents as 'citizens of the world'.

> The physical geography [course] which I am announcing hereby belongs to an idea which I make myself of a useful academic instruction and which I may call the preliminary exercise in the knowledge of the world. This knowledge of the world serves to procure the pragmatic element for all otherwise acquired sciences and skills, by means of which they become useful not merely for the school but rather for life and through which the accomplished apprentice is introduced to the stage of his destiny, namely, the world. (Kant, *On the Different Races of Human Beings*, 97 [2:443])[4]

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[1] As the following works by Kant are cited frequently, I have used the following abbreviations: *Anthropology* (*Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View*), *Observations* (*Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and the Sublime*,), and *Groundwork* (*Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*). The reference is to the Akademie edition of Kant's works, using the translations from the Cambridge Edition of Kant's Works (Cambridge University Press). I would like to thank Tamas Demeter for his support whilst writing this paper, and two referees of this journal for their critical comments.

[2] Kant, *Anthropology*, 231 [7:119].

[3] Vol. XXV of the Academy edition of *Kant's gesammelte Schriften* (Göttingen, 1997) as well as its English translation (Cambridge University Press, 2013) contain extremely useful introductions detailing the nature of the transcripts and their historical background (Brandt and Stark, 'Einleitung', vii-cli, and Wood 'Introduction', 1-10). Due to restrictions of space, I refer to them for a presentation of Kant's *Lectures* themselves.

[4] Kant's *Lectures on Physical Geography*, part of which developed into his *Lectures on Anthropology*, were popular lectures attended by and partly intended for the general public (see Kant, *Anthropology*,

To accomplish this task, Kant focuses on knowledge 'of practical relevance', that is to say knowledge that is useful to one's conduct in life.[5] This knowledge has an extremely broad scope: it discloses 'the sources of all the [practical] sciences, the science of morality, of skill, of human intercourse, of the way to educate and govern human beings, and thus of everything that pertains to the practical'.[6]

Kant begins his *Anthropology* with an explicit reference to its aims: pragmatic knowledge of the human being is 'the investigation of what he as a free-acting being makes of himself, or can and should make of himself'.[7] The 'make' points to the descriptive part of Kant's project – what men actually make, or have made, of themselves. The 'can make' refers to the realm of possibility, i.e., the scope and limits of the human being's influence on himself, whilst the 'should make' indicates the prescriptive part of Kant's project, which encompasses the whole realm of human action – i.e., its technical, prudential and moral dimensions.[8]

Of course, as is regularly noted by commentators, Kant sometimes calls the prudential dimension of human action 'pragmatic'. For instance, he writes,

> The first imperative could also be called technical (belonging to art), the second pragmatic (belonging to welfare), the third moral (belonging to free conduct as such, that is, to morals). (Kant, *Groundwork*, 69 [4:416–17])[9]

However, far from entailing an inconsistency, it merely implies that, as already hinted at, the word 'pragmatic' can be understood in two distinct senses: in a narrow sense as 'prudential' and having to do with welfare and happiness, and in a broad sense as 'practical' and having to do with the field of action in general. My claim is that Kant's use of the term 'pragmatic' to describe his *Anthropology* refers to the latter rather than the former, for its recommendations encompass all of the dimensions of human actions: the development of skills, the means of achieving happiness, and the helps and hindrances to morality. In other words, the prescriptive dimension of anthropology is based on the knowledge of what is necessary to achieve one's purposes, whether they are technical, prudential or moral.

233∗ [7:122]). For a presentation of Kant's lectures on anthropology and their reception, see Wilson, *Kant's Pragmatic*, 7–26, and Brandt and Stark, 'Einleitung', vii–cli. On the genesis of Kant's lectures on anthropology, see Zammito, *Kant, Herder*, 293–302 and Wilson 'A Gap'.

[5] Kant, *Anthropology*, 233 [7:122].

[6] Kant, *Correspondence*, 141 [10:145]. The notion of 'knowledge' is of course problematic here since Kant does not mean to suggest that the knowledge at stake in anthropology is of the same kind as the knowledge in natural science. However, it goes well beyond the remit of this paper to tackle this issue. Suffices to say that for Kant, anthropological knowledge is based on empirical generalisation, induction and interpretation. For discussions of this question, see Cohen, *Kant*, Sturm, *Kant* and Wilson, *Kant's Pragmatic*.

[7] Kant, *Anthropology*, 231 [7:119].

[8] As is regularly noted by commentators, Kant sometimes calls the prudential dimension of human action 'pragmatic'. For instance, he writes, 'The first imperative could also be called technical (belonging to art), the second pragmatic (belonging to welfare), the third moral (belonging to free conduct as such, that is, to morals).' (Kant, *Groundwork*, 69 [4:416–17]) However, far from entailing an inconsistency, it merely implies that, as already hinted at, the word 'pragmatic' can be understood in two distinct senses: in a narrow sense as 'prudential' and having to do with welfare and happiness, and in a broad sense as 'practical' and having to do with the field of action in general. My claim is that Kant's use of the term 'pragmatic' to describe his *Anthropology* refers to the latter rather than the former, for its recommendations encompass all of the dimensions of human actions: the development of skills, the means of achieving happiness, and the helps and hindrances to morality (Kant, *Anthropology*, 294 [7:186], 342 [7:239], 264–5 [7:153]). In other words, the prescriptive dimension of anthropology is based on the knowledge of what is necessary to achieve one's purposes, whether they are technical, prudential or moral.

[9] See also *Metaphysics of Morals*, 565–6 [6:444–6].

However, if the notions of technical and prudential roles of anthropology do not seem to pose any difficulty, the idea of a moral role of anthropology does, and it does so for numerous reasons that have recently been the object of much debate amongst Kant scholars.[10] Can we reconcile Kant's various, and apparently inconsistent, uses of the concept of moral anthropology?

As is often noted, the concept of a 'moral' or a 'practical' anthropology occurs in Kant's works in an apparently inconsistent fashion. In the *Groundwork*, moral anthropology is described as the empirical part of ethics, and Kant makes clear that it should be totally separated from pure ethics: it is 'of the utmost necessity to work out for once a pure moral philosophy, completely cleansed of everything that may be only empirical and that belongs to anthropology'.[11] Yet in the *Metaphysics of Morals*, anthropology seems to be incorporated into the project of pure ethics: 'a metaphysics of morals cannot dispense with principles of application, and we shall often have to take as our object the particular nature of human beings, which is cognised only by experience, in order to show in it what can be inferred from universal moral principles'.[12] Can these two claims be reconciled?

I want to argue that this apparent inconsistency disappears if we focus specifically on the difference between the various projects at stake, and in particular on the notion of an 'application' of ethics to human nature. Claudia Schmidt makes an important contribution in this respect. She distinguishes between two senses of the word 'application': 'One is the a priori or constitutive application of the pure principles of morality to the human being, as an empirical given type of moral agent, in order to generate an a priori system of the types of duties which are binding for this type of agent. The other is what we may call the empirical or motivational application of the doctrine arising from this system of morality to any individual human will, in order to improve the moral conduct of that individual.'[13] With this distinction in hand, we can proceed to the division of the different tasks assigned to the various strands of Kant's ethical project: first, the project that produces an a priori system of duties for rational agents in general (*Groundwork*, *Critique of Practical Reason*); second, the project that generates an a priori system of the duties that are binding upon a particular type of agent, namely human agents (*Metaphysics of Morals*); and third, the project that examines the worldly helps and hindrances to human moral agency (*Anthropology* and *Lectures on Anthropology*).

On this basis, and to summarise my interpretation of the nature of Kant's pragmatic anthropology, it may be helpful to position it within the ongoing debate between Reinhard Brandt and Werner Stark. Brandt argues that pragmatic anthropology is 'not the discipline of practical anthropology, variously described by Kant, that was supposed to function as a complement to pure moral philosophy'.[14] By contrast, Stark holds that 'an internal, positive relationship exists between Kant's

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[10] See, for instance, Frierson, *Freedom*, Louden 'Applying' and Schmidt 'Kant's Transcendental'.
[11] Kant, *Groundwork*, 44 [4:389].
[12] Kant, *Metaphysics of Morals*, 372 [6:217].
[13] Schmidt 'Anthropological Dimension', 72–3. On this basis, I believe that talking about moral anthropology in terms of the 'application' of Kant's ethics is very unhelpful. For instance, the title of Louden's paper 'Applying Kant's Ethics: The Role of Anthropology' is misleading, for it blurs the boundary between the pure principles of practical reason and their application on the one hand (which includes pure ethics and the metaphysics of morals), and the moral use of anthropology on the other hand. As Louden himself notes, moral anthropology has to do with making morality efficacious in human life (Louden, 'Applying', 355–7). Thus the idea of 'applying ethics' is, in this context, more appropriate to the project of the *Metaphysics of Morals*.
[14] Brandt, 'The Guiding Idea', 92.

lectures on anthropology and his moral philosophy; [...] Kant considered anthropology to be an integral part of his philosophy (including his critical philosophy), and that it is not to be reckoned as a mere appendage to the system. [. . .] The positive and critical content of the anthropology, in my opinion, cannot be reduced to a mere doctrine of prudence.' [15] I agree with Brandt that pragmatic anthropology is not identical to moral anthropology insofar as the former also contains what could be called 'prudential' anthropology. However, I agree with Stark that pragmatic anthropology does contain a specifically moral anthropology. In this sense, moral anthropology as I defined it can be thought of as a sub-discipline of the broader field of pragmatic anthropology.

As a result, within its pragmatic context, Kant's anthropology essentially aims at accomplishing three tasks. First, it describes human beings' behaviour relative to their purposes. Second, it deduces from their predispositions the scope of what they can make of themselves. Third, it draws conclusions regarding what they should do, pragmatically, in order to accomplish the best possible fulfilment of their purposes, whether technical, prudential or moral.

2. The Physiological vs. the Natural

Pragmatic anthropology is defined from the very beginning in opposition with the investigation of what nature makes of the human being:

> Physiological knowledge of the human being concerns the investigation of what *nature* makes of the human being; pragmatic, the investigation of what *he* as a free-acting being makes of himself, or can and should make of himself (Kant, *Anthropology* 231 [7:119]).

This key passage from the Introduction of Kant's *Anthropology* has often been interpreted as inaugurating a paradigm for anthropology that rejects the investigation of 'what nature makes of the human being' in favour of the investigation of 'what the human being makes of himself'.[16] Yet far from rejecting the inquiry into 'what nature makes of man' *as a whole*, I believe that Kant merely rejects one of its forms, namely the physiological inquiry into mind-body relations; however, he does not reject the inquiry into the natural characteristics of human beings.

Kant defines his pragmatic anthropology negatively by contrasting it with physiological anthropology:

> He who ponders natural phenomena, for example, what the causes of the faculty of memory may rest on, can speculate back and forth (like Descartes) over the traces of impressions remaining in the brain, but in doing so he must admit that in this play of his representations he is a mere observer and must let nature runs its course, for he does not know the cranial nerves and fibers, nor does he understand how to put them to use for his purposes. Therefore all theoretical speculation about this [physiological knowledge of the human being] is a pure waste of time. (Kant, *Anthropology*, 231 [7:119])

As noted by numerous commentators, this passage should be read as a criticism of the work of Platner, and in particular of his definition of anthropology. [17] Platner

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[15] Stark, 'Historical Notes', 21.

[16] The first interpreter to do this is in fact Schleiermacher in his *Review of Kant's Anthropology*, 16. I have discussed it in detail in Cohen, "A Response". See also Frierson, *Freedom*, ch. 1.

[17] For an account of Platner's views, see Zammito, *Birth*, 250–3 and for a lengthy study, Naschert & Stiening, *Ernst Platner*. Zammito notes that in the lecture course for 1772–73 [25:I:9], Kant criticised physiological approaches to anthropology targeting Charles Bonnet instead of Ernst Platner (Zammito,

conceives of anthropology as the synthesis of the physical science of physiology and anatomy on the one hand, and psychology on the other: it studies body and soul in their mutual relations, limitations and interactions.[18] Kant rejects physiological approaches to anthropology in a letter to Hertz: 'the subtle and, to my view, eternally futile inquiries as to the manner in which bodily organs are connected with thought I omit entirely'.[19] For Kant, physiological investigations of human nature should not belong to anthropology. A number of passages from the *Anthropology* reiterate and justify this claim. First, these investigations have not reached a sufficient level of scientific certainty to be reliable: 'physicians and physiologists in general are still not advanced enough to see deeply into the mechanical element in the human being.'[20] But even if they could reach such a level, which Kant believes they could, second, insofar as the purpose of his anthropology is pragmatic, it cannot make any use of physiological knowledge in this context. Physiology can certainly be of some use to doctors but not to human beings who want to use anthropological knowledge to realise their purposes.[21] Thus it is the intent of Kant's anthropological project, namely its usefulness for the conduct of life, that delimits the relevance of its content.

> [T]he materials for an anthropology […] the method of their use in attempting a history of humanity in the whole of its vocation […] may be sought neither in metaphysics nor in the cabinet of natural history specimens by comparing the skeleton of the human being with that of other species of animals (Kant, *Review of Herder's Ideas* 134 [8:56])

Therefore, it is crucial to distinguish between two conceptions of the enquiry into 'what nature makes of the human being': one as the investigation of the mind–body relation, physiological anthropology, the other as the investigation of the natural characteristics of the human species. As I will show, Kant does in fact proceed to the enquiry into 'what nature makes of the human being' in the latter sense. So if one form of the enquiry, namely the investigation of mind–body relations, is vain, another form, that of the investigation of the natural characteristics of the human species, is legitimate when it is used to improve our pragmatic knowledge of human beings – a knowledge that is necessary for us to use nature, and in particular our nature, to realise our purposes. In other words, far from requiring us to choose between explanatory and normative standpoints, adopting adopting a normative point of view on the human being calls for an explanatory one – although it may seem at first glance paradoxical since they are often portrayed as opposed if not incompatible. From the standpoint of pragmatic anthropology, 'what nature makes of the human being' is indispensable to 'what he should make of himself' since human beings need to know their nature as well as nature in order to be able to determine what they are capable of. As a result, even from a pragmatic standpoint, human beings have to take into account parts of the naturalistic account of themselves, whether it is their temperament, gender, race, nationality and so on.[22] Doing so amounts to seeing the human species as a natural species that is nonetheless free, and understanding its natural determinations

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Birth, 469). For a historical description of the various 'medical' or 'physiological' studies of human beings contemporary with Kant, see Lestition, *Anthropology* and Sturm, *Kant*.

[18] See Platner, *Anthropologie*.

[19] Kant, *Correspondence*, 141 [10:145].

[20] Kant, *Anthropology*, 319 [7:214]. See also Kant, *Anthropology*, 385 [7:287].

[21] See Sturm who talks about Kant's irrelevance thesis 'concerning the empirical knowledge of the physiological basis of the mind' (Sturm, 'Why', 495). He contrasts it with other contemporary critics who based their objections upon epistemological or methodological arguments, and develops it at length in *Kant*.

[22] Kant, *Anthropology*, 383 [7:283].

as compatible with the possibility of its freedom. As summed up in the *Friedländer Lectures on Anthropology*, 'Anthropology is thus a pragmatic knowledge of what results from our nature'.[23]

The clearest instance of natural anthropology, the investigation of the natural characteristics of the human species, can be found in Kant's 'Anthropological characteristics', where he argues that temperaments, sexes, races and nations are – at least partly – determined according to nature's intentions for the human species. In the rest of the paper, I will focus on Kant's account of human temperaments and use it as a case-study for my suggestion. As I will show, the knowledge of natural human characteristics is of crucial pragmatic use, for it helps human beings learn about the natural dimension of their behaviour, thereby enabling them to act more effectively.

2. Kant's account of human temperaments

A number of human characteristics are defined as being determined, at least partly, according to nature's intentions for the species: 'Innate to human nature are germs which develop and can achieve the perfection for which they are determined.'[24] Amongst them are human temperaments, which are defined, at least partly, as products or effects of nature: 'what nature makes of the human being […] belongs to temperament (where the subject is for the most part passive)'.[25] More precisely, Kant distinguishes between natural aptitude, temperament and character: 'natural aptitude has more (subjectively) to do with the feeling of pleasure or displeasure' – it is a passive feeling –, whereas temperament has to do '(objectively) with the faculty of desire' and is thus active. However, both natural aptitude and temperament belong to sensibility, whilst character belongs to the mode of thinking: 'The first two predispositions indicate what can be made of the human being; the last (moral) predisposition indicates what he is prepared to make of himself.'[26] Temperaments are thus effects of nature (i.e. they belong to the domain of 'what Nature makes of the human being') whilst character is a product of freedom (i.e. it belongs to the domain of what the human being makes of himself).

In his *Anthropology*, Kant distinguishes between four temperaments: the choleric, the phlegmatic, the melancholic and the sanguine.[27] Whilst it is unnecessary to discuss the detail of these temperaments here, what is crucial for my present purpose is that each temperament has particular natural tendencies, and in particular tendencies that favour certain moods, emotions and inclinations. For instance, the sanguine, who 'is carefree and of good cheer; he attributes a great importance to each thing for the moment, and the next moment may not give it another thought'; the melancholic, who 'attributes a great importance to all things that concern himself'; the choleric, who 'is hot-tempered, flares up quickly like straw-fire'; and finally, the

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[23] Kant, *Lectures on Anthropology-Friedländer* 48 [25:471].

[24] Kant, *Lectures on Anthropology-Friedländer* 227 [25:694]. See also Kant, *Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Aim*, 109-11 [8:18-21].

[25] Kant, *Anthropology*, 390 [7:292].

[26] Kant, *Anthropology*, 384 [7:285–6]. As noted by a referee of this journal, Kant's notion of character is complex. For, Kant recognises that 'character' is often used to designate habits of behaviour (including those that result from temperament), and distinguishes this from 'Charakter schlechthin' (7:292, and 8:285), which he identifies with 'Denkungsart'. Whilst I acknowledge this complexity, I believe that it is irrelevant to my argument.

[27] For a detailed account of Kant's concept of temperament, in particular relative to the historical tradition of the temperaments, see Larrimore 'Substitutes'.

phlegmatic, who has 'the propensity to inactivity'.[28] In other words, each temperament has its own emotional profile.

While Kant's account of temperaments describes them as part of the world of nature, it does not entail that they cannot have a pragmatic role to play, for as I will argue, anthropological knowledge of temperaments has important pragmatic uses for human beings. I will begin by spelling out its uses for cognition, before turning to its uses for morality.

3. The pragmatic uses of human temperaments: Kant's anthropology of cognition

The aim of Kant's anthropology of cognition to instruct human beings how to cultivate their cognitive capacities so as to make the best use of them – note how Kant repeatedly talks of 'the use of understanding and reason', 'the use of reason', 'the *use of the understanding*' or the 'purposive use of [the faculty of cognition]'.[29] On this basis, it develops along two complementary lines. On the one hand, it studies nature's purposes for the human species – the natural dimension of human cognition. On the other hand, it uses this knowledge to help us realise of our cognitive vocation – the pragmatic dimension of human cognition. This pragmatic dimension consists in spelling out the natural subjective conditions that help or hinder our cognition, thereby enabling us to become more cognitively efficacious. As I will show, since each type of temperament comes with its own brand of cognitive strengths and weaknesses, the knowledge of our temperament is a crucial help to the progress of our cognition. It enables us not only to be conscious of the pitfalls we face, but also to know how to best use our strengths and improve upon our weaknesses.[30] For instance, as Kant writes:

> The question thus is, what is better, to carry out one's work in a short time, in order to have the remaining time entirely for leisure, or to carry out the same work very gradually over a long time, without having time left over for leisure? The difference is based on people's temperaments. (Kant, *Lectures on Anthropology-Friedländer* 61-2 [25:488])

Table 1. Cognitive disparities between temperaments[31]

Temperaments	*Strengths*	*Weaknesses*
Sanguine	Popular, witty, lively	Trivial, thoughtless, disorderly
Melancholic	Profound, original, serious	Obscure, dogmatic, obstinate, punctilious
Choleric	Methodical, precise, keen-witted, orderly	Incorrect, doesn't bear contradiction, dogmatic
Phlegmatic	Sweeping, talented imitator	Laborious, superficial, procrastinator, sluggish

[28] Kant, *Anthropology,* 386–8 [7:288–90]. See also Kant, *Observations*, 33-6 [2:220-24].

[29] Based on Kant, *Anthropology* 386-8 [7:288-91], *Lectures on Anthropology-Mrongovius* 386 [25:1261], *Lectures on Anthropology-Friedländer* 106 [25:545], *Lectures on Anthropology-Busolt* 520 [25:1481], *Lectures on Logic-Jäsche* 577 [9:74], *Critique of the Power of Judgment* 175 [5:295]. For an overall account of Kant's anthropology of cognition, see Cohen, "Anthropology".

[30] See for instance Kant, *Lectures on Anthropology-Friedländer* 89 [25:522], *Lectures on Anthropology-Mrongovius* 396 [25:1275], and *Anthropology* 295 [7:186].

[31] Kant, *Anthropology,* 386–8 [7:288–90], *Lectures on Anthropology-Friedländer* 185, 188-91 [25:641, 25:644-7] and *Lectures on Anthropology-Mrongovius* 366, 469-72 [25:1237, 25:1373-6].

First, negatively, since depending on our temperament we have the tendency to make certain kinds of errors, have weak capacities or even lack certain powers, knowing our temperament can make our cognitive endeavours more reliable by pointing to potential pitfalls. The awareness of our cognitive weaknesses thus enables us to be more responsive to them and thereby less likely to fail or err. It reveals domains where our temperament is pointing in the direction of error (for instance, the melancholic is dogmatic), and conversely domains where our temperament is pointing away from error (for instance, the choleric is precise). On the basis of this knowledge, the melancholic should be mindful of the fact that he might be blind to other points of view, whilst the choleric can safely rely on the details of his calculations. Similarly, since the sanguine is witty and lively of spirit but lacks profundity, he should be attentive to the fact that his cognitive endeavours will require 'more investigation and seriousness'.[32] Or to take an example that Kant is particularly keen on, people's capacity for memory will exhibit different strengths and weaknesses depending on their temperament.[33]

> Sanguine people have an adroit and vivid memory, phlegmatic people have a slow and lasting (*tenax*) memory. Choleric people have a memory that is faithful but does not grasp easily (*non capax*). Melancholics have a vast and faithful memory. (Kant, *Lectures on Anthropology-Mrongovius* 397 [25:1276])

Thus, the phlegmatic should not rely on memories that he acquired too quickly whilst the melancholic can. Taking account of it in their cognitive endeavours will make them more efficient, more reliable and generally more successful.

Second, positively, being aware of our temperament is helpful to determine the course of action that is best for our cognition: which talent needs cultivating, which capacity needs improving, which endeavour we should engage in and which we should avoid. For instance, since the melancholic, whilst profound and serious, lacks a certain 'liveliness of the spirit', he should avoid disciplines that require it, such as scientific popularisation.[34] By contrast, the sanguine is particularly well suited to it since he is lively and witty. Moreover, since certain temperaments have the tendency to weaken the use of particular capacities, specific cognitive measures can be taken to strengthen them. For instance, phlegmatics should work on their short-term memory by recording little and striving to remember many things, whilst cholerics should develop their speed by using the understanding to help remember topics and frameworks.[35]

Needless to say, I could list many other examples from Kant's *Lectures on Anthropology*. But I believe that what I have argued so far suffices to conclude that the anthropological knowledge of temperaments, and of the empirical features of human cognition more generally, is helpful to the successful realisation of our cognitive endeavours. Of course, it does not entail that we cannot possibly realise

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[32] Kant, *Lectures on Anthropology-Friedländer* 185, 188-91 [25:641, 25:644-7] and *Lectures on Anthropology-Mrongovius* 366, 470-2 [25:1237, 25:1373-6].

[33] Famously, it is the example he uses to illustrate the purpose of pragmatic anthropology in the *Anthropology*'s introduction: 'if he uses perceptions concerning what has been found to hinder or stimulate memory in order to enlarge it or make it agile, and if he requires knowledge of the human being for this, then this would be a part of anthropology with a pragmatic purpose, and this is precisely what concerns us here' (Kant, *Anthropology* 231 [7:119]).

[34] Kant, *Lectures on Anthropology-Friedländer* 186 [25:641]. 'He who determines his horizon aesthetically seeks to arrange science according to the taste of the public, i.e., to make it *popular*, or in general to attain only such cognitions as may be universally communicated, and in which the class of the unlearned, too, find pleasure and interest' (Kant, *Lectures on Logic-Jäsche* 550 [24:40-1])

[35] Kant, *Lectures on Anthropology-Mrongovius* 396 [25:1275].

them without it but rather that this knowledge enables us to be more efficient and reliable knowers.

4. The pragmatic uses of human temperaments: Kant's anthropology of morals

Since temperaments are part of the world of nature, insofar as they give rise to sensible incentives, they cannot lead to genuine virtue, which, being based on character, stems from the will. However, Kant often seems to claim that although temperaments cannot lead to moral worth, they nevertheless play some kind of role *vis-à-vis* morality. Each temperament has its own emotional profile, and since some feelings are more helpful or harmful than others, we ought to attend to our emotional capacities if and when they impact our moral agency. As I will suggest, there are two essential ways in which they do so. First, knowing the emotional tendencies associated with our temperament makes the realization of our moral goals more effective by pointing to potential pitfalls. Second, with each temperament comes the tendency to weaken the use of certain capacities – or rather, to pose stronger obstacles to the use of certain capacities for moral purposes. Thus, temperaments have no part to play with the agent's moral improvement as such, but rather indirectly with the improvement of his natural capacities. They do not help the making of the moral choice but rather, they help the realization of the choice, whatever it is, by identifying the subjective human features that may either further or hinder it.[36]

Table 2. Emotional disparities between temperaments[37]

Temperaments	*Strengths*	*Weaknesses*
Choleric	Sense of honor, shame	Prone to passions
Sanguine	Generous, Sympathetic, good heart	Sinner, fickle
Melancholic	Noble and righteous	Selfish
Phlegmatic	Apathetic	Unsympathetic

To begin with, knowing our emotional tendencies makes the realization of our moral goals more effective by pointing to potential pitfalls. For instance, our emotional tendencies can point in the same direction as duty (for instance, the sanguine temperament and the duty of benevolence, since he is naturally generous), or conversely they can point away from duty (for instance, the melancholic temperament and the duty to keep promises, since he doesn't naturally keep his word). It follows that in coinciding situations (when emotional tendencies and duty converge), I should discriminate between the moral and the non-moral motives so as to isolate the dutiful one. Conversely in conflicting situations (when emotional tendencies and duty diverge), I should exercise control over the non-moral motives so as to facilitate action from the moral one. For instance, the melancholic should be wary of making

[36] Larrimore interestingly remarks that as Kant moves from an ethics based on feeling to an ethics based on rational autonomy, his theory of temperaments also changes. For instance, in *Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and the Sublime*, Kant celebrates the melancholic as the virtuous temperament par excellence, whilst in the Anthropology he commends the phlegmatic as the temperament that can serve as a substitute for wisdom (Larrimore, "Substitutes", 259).

[37] Kant, *Observations*, 32-3 [2:219-20] and *Anthropology*, 386-9 [7:288-91].

promises unless he is certain he can keep them; or in situations when the duty of benevolence applies, the sanguine should question his seemingly benevolent motives whilst the choleric should temper his selfish motives.

Second, since each temperament has its own emotional profile, with it comes the tendency to weaken the use of certain capacities – or rather, to pose stronger obstacles to the use of certain capacities for moral purposes. For instance, choleric temperaments are more prone to passions than others. And since passions hinder the ability to choose rationally, cholerics ought to refine, and if possible overcome, their passions in order to strengthen their capacity for self-control. Although taming one's inclinations is not a virtue, it eases the realisation of duty by facilitating self-control. In a similar way, each temperament has particular weaknesses which it ought to address. Sanguine temperaments ought to attend to their capacity for self-mastery by refining their feelings. Phlegmatic temperaments on the other hand are not prone to feeling sympathy. They are naturally insensitive to human distress, and thus unable to detect situations where they ought to exercise their duty of benevolence.[38] As a result, it is more important for them to attend to their capacity for sympathy by encouraging acquaintance with other people's painful feelings. The melancholic, by 'attributing a great importance to all things that concern himself', is naturally selfish. Thus it will be important for him to attend to his capacity for disinterested love by cultivating his appreciation of natural beauty.

Table 3. The moral role of anthropology

Temperament	*Recommendation*	*Capacity*
Sanguine	To silence the voices that obstruct conscience	Conscience
Phlegmatic	To sympathise with others' fate	Sympathy
Choleric	To read books, to refine feelings	Self-mastery
Melancholic	To appreciate natural beauty	Disinterested love

Of course, the capacities for feelings thereby cultivated have no intrinsic moral worth. For one could just as well use them for immoral purposes. A melancholic who develops his sympathetic feelings, or a choleric who learns to control his emotions, is not a morally improved agent; his moral character is not better than if he had not cultivated these capacities; rather, first, he is a more efficient moral agent in the sense that he will be better armed to carry out his purposes. And second, one could say that this agent will be more confident (though never certain) that he is as committed as possible to the realisation of duty; or at least that he will be more warranted in feeling confident than agents who do not cultivate these capacities at all.[39]

5. Conclusion

Whilst Kant's anthropology is expressedly normative in its intent, I have shown in what sense achieving its purpose requires it to have an explanatory dimension. To support this claim, I have focused on the case of temperaments. I have done so because I believe that it provides a good illustration of how an agent can use descriptive knowledge about her nature to inform her decisions and help her realize

[38] Kant, *Anthropology*, 386 [7:288].

[39] For a defense of the (different) claim that we have an indirect duty to cultivate our capacities for certain feelings on the basis of the anthropological knowledge of our temperament, see Cohen, *Kant*, 89-104.

her purposes more efficiently. Of course, one may be tempted to object that Kant's account of temperament is hardly the pinnacle of his achievements.[40] I cannot but agree, although this is not the point. Whatever the detail of his account, it is the role it plays in his anthropology that I aimed to emphasize. Namely, the *naturalistic* knowledge of temperaments is an essential component of the *pragmatic* use of anthropology as applied to Kant's typology of human temperaments. Some have been sceptical of the supposed usefulness of these typological descriptions. As Zammito has noted for instance, 'it was not clear how much value these typologies might have provided his students for the world.'[41] Yet once again, while the content of Kant's typology of temperament can legitimately be questioned, as many have done for his account of gender or race, there is no doubt that the principle behind it is sound.[42] To put it rather simplistically, if someone wants to improve his cognitive skills, he will do so more efficiently if he knows his cognitive weaknesses, and any explanatory discipline that offers a typology of them will be relevant to and in fact essential to his enterprise of cognitive self-improvement. The same goes for morality. As embodied rational agents, we ought to attend to our emotional capacities if and when they have an impact on our moral agency. Since they do so more often than not, a crucial part of anthropology is to provide the empirical knowledge (and in the case we are discussing, of our temperaments) that is necessary to identify the features that can help or hinder the performance of our duty.[43]

Whilst this paper has focused mostly on the case of human temperaments, I believe that it applies to all dimensions and levels of human nature. First, pragmatic anthropology provides knowledge of how to improve human cognition. It also provides numerous recommendations for ways of improving the use of cognitive faculties: memory, sensory perception, understanding, judgement and reason, imagination, wisdom and so on.[44] To be able to do so, natural anthropology needs to identify different types of cognitive derangements that afflict the faculties of human cognition, and suggests various ways of overcoming them. For instance, it examines the decreasing, weakening and entire loss of the faculty of the senses and the soul's weaknesses and illnesses with respect to its cognitive faculty.[45] Second, pragmatic anthropology provides knowledge of how to help the realisation of our agency in the world, including moral purposes. On the one hand, it identifies the hindrances to morality and suggests various ways of overcoming them: combating passions, controlling emotions, moderating affects and so on.[46] On the other hand, it identifies the helps to morality: moral education, political institutions, politeness, social intercourse and so on.[47] Third, pragmatic anthropology provides knowledge of how to

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[40] I would like to thank a referee for raising this point.

[41] Zammito, "What a Young Man", 239-40.

[42] See for instance Eze, 'Colour' and Mikkola, 'Kant'.

[43] One may further object that the descriptions and the explanations provided by anthropology are not proper knowledge. It goes well beyond the scope of this paper to discuss this issue, but briefly, I believe that this knowledge is based on empirical generalisations that rely on observation, statistics and interpretation, as discussed in Cohen, *Kant*, 52-60.

[44] Respectively in Kant, *Anthropology*, 291–5 [7:182–6], 261–3 [7:149–51], 273–8 [7:162–6], 304–9 [7:197–202], 278–84 [7:167–74]; 332–3 [7:228–9]. For details on the improvement of the general cognitive faculty, see Schmidt, "Disorders". See also Makkreel, "Imagination", on the use and misuse of imagination.

[45] Kant, *Anthropology*, 275–84 [7:165–75] and 309–26 [7:202–21].

[46] *Anthropology*, 366–76 [7:265–75], 355–66 [7:253–65] and *Metaphysics of Morals* 535–6 [6:407–8].

[47] Respectively in Kant, *Lectures on Pedagogy*, 473–85 [9:486–99], *Perpetual Peace* 131fn [8:375], *Idea*, 111–12 [8:21] and *Speculative Beginnings*, 165–7 [8:111–13] for political institutions, and *Anthropology*, 39 [7:152–3] and *Metaphysics of Morals* 588 [6:473–4] for politeness and social

realise our prudential purposes, and in particular happiness. To be able to do so, natural anthropology needs to examines cases of boredom and amusement, sensuous pleasures, taste, the art of good living and so on.[48]

Therefore, an essential part of pragmatic anthropology consists in identifying the worldly helps and hindrances to the realisation of human purposes in the world. And as I have argued, this can only be achieved through the investigation of what nature makes of the human being. In this sense, far from being independent of each other, or even excluding each other, as is often presupposed, the normative standpoint necessitates the explanatory one.

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intercourse.

[48] Respectively in Kant, *Anthropology*, 336–42 [7:233–9], 333–5 [7:230–3], 342–52 [7:239–49] and 352–3 [7:249–50].

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